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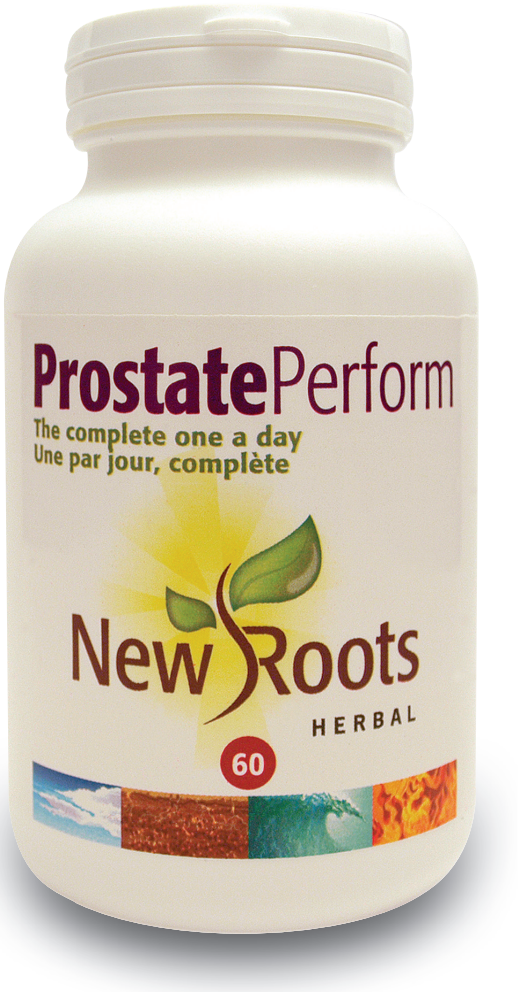

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Publisher & Senior Editor - Joseph Roberts
Comptroller - Rajesh Chawla
Managing Editor - Sonya Weir
Design & Production - PeruBlueSky.ca

Contributors:
Robert Alstead, Steve Anderson, Alan Cassels, John M. Darch, Guy Dauncey, Adrien Dilon, Carolyn Herriot, Vesanto Melina, Geoff Olson, Gwen Randall-Young, Joseph Roberts, David Suzuki, Eckhart Tolle, Heather Wardle

Sales - Head office 604-733-2215
toll-free 1-800-365-8897

Contact Common Ground:
Phone: **604-733-2215**
Fax: 604-733-4415
Advertising: admin@commonground.ca
Editorial: editor@commonground.ca

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Believe it or not

WRITING ON THE WALL *Joseph Roberts*

Welcome to the December issue of *Common Ground*. In this last month of 2008, we look to 2009 with renewed hope for the change that we believe will come.

The great news is that we don't have to worry about Sarah Pallin ruling the empire to the south, given that Barack Obama seized the day. Like many others, I cried when I saw Obama delivering his speech at the park in Chicago. As the TV cameras panned the audience, both young and old alike had tears in their eyes. And the very eldest wept as they had seen the times when their forefathers were slaves, and they, themselves, had had to drink from a different water fountain than white folks, and forced to sit at the back of the bus. Maybe Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King were watching through the eyes of those elders who are still alive to see the dream come true. Hallelujah!

Although we were hustled along into a federal election a year ahead of schedule, the offending party did not win the coveted, supreme prize of a majority. Former president Bill Clinton spoke at a recent BCBC talk in Vancouver. At the same function, Stockwell Day joked after dinner that the CPC now had a more "muscular minority." Well, as we are all aware, Bill's muscular minority got him into lots of trouble with Monica.

In Vancouver, we also saw two provincial by-elections vote for change. Then, to the amazement of many Vancouverites, Vision Vancouver vanquished the prior, ruling civic NPA party, taking the mayor's seat and all other positions, leaving the NPA with only one seat on city council. During mayor-elect Gregor Robertson's acceptance speech at the Vancouver Hotel, he made promises for change.

We are the change we have been waiting for; now is the time. And as Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

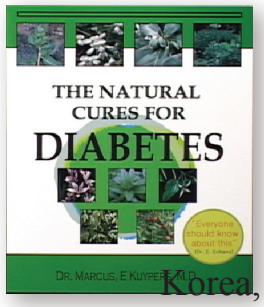
This edition launches a new column titled *Independent Media*, which will link the important information media issues, such as internet neutrality, keeping media honest, and protecting the freedom of those who do not own huge media empires so they too have their voices heard. We welcome Steve Anderson, organizer of Media Democracy Day at the VPL, an event well worth your participation if you missed it this year.

It seems many among us voted for change and are ready to act to create a more humane and civil society. So why is it that many others misunderstand or fear change? It is partially because we have different beliefs. So why are beliefs so hard to change, and why do governments, corporations and religions invest so much money and effort to imprint and defend their chosen beliefs? Because, to a large degree, beliefs run people's lives. We get identified with our beliefs. People feel their existence depends on this identity and when their cherished beliefs appear to be threatened, they defend them as if their ego's survival depended on it. Beliefs become engrained, passed on from generation to generation, or more lately from TV to video games to Facebook. These fossilized thought programs fundamentally stop people from questioning. Thus, they defend their belief system with the full force of their survival instinct. Useful

continued p.22…

Do You Know?

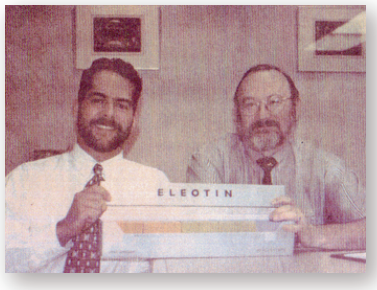
Many pharmaceutical drugs worsen diabetes, and some actually cause the disease!



"Natural Cures for Diabetes" *(Authored by Dr. M. Kuypers, 91pages)*

Natural and Safe reversal of Diabetes with no side effects!

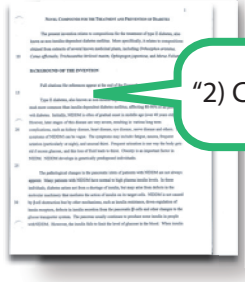
From the moment this 91 paged book was first published by Human Love Publishing Co. in 2005, it began to draw keen attention of many diabetes experts and doctors around the world, as well as their patients. The book has been translated and published in China, Korea, Japan, US, and Australia since then. Regarding P 700, which is the natural treatment introduced in this book, researchers of prestigious universities declare that it is not just a symptomatic treatment, but, a 'cure' for Type II diabetes, and it restores normalcy for 70% of patients.



University of Calgary officials (UTI)

"A U of C treatment helps most Type II diabetics."

"This remedy will restore near normalcy for 70% of Type II diabetics."



"2) Cure of NIDDM"

University of Calgary document about P-700

National Diabetic Associations and Pharmaceutical Associations of various countries declared that P700 is ***an ideal cure*** (Chinese Nanjing Diabetes Associations)" and that "***This cures more than 70% of patients*** (Korean Diabetes Association and Pharmacists Associations)."

Many medical doctors around the world are using the P700 treatment on themselves, as well as, recommending this natural treatment to their patients and publishing scientific studies on their findings.
Dr. Sichel says "***This is a path finding discovery in the reversal of diabetes***" "***Hope for the complete cure finally begins***" says Dr. Ho, and Dr. Echano says "***I know that this is highly recommended by major international diabetes associations.***"

The efficacy and safety of this treatment is well recognized and established internationally. The Chinese equivalent of the US FDA issued an approval after rigorously performing animal, toxicology, and clinical tests on the products based on this natural treatment. A few governments followed suit. These approvals and permits cover 40% of world population now, and these products have been sold in more than 50 countries. The most reputed Chinese University, Tsinghua University, not only approved of this natural treatment, but also became the representative distributor in China.

There are approximately 30,000 websites that talk about this natural treatment.

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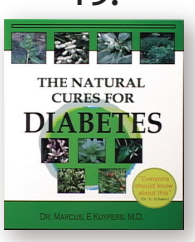

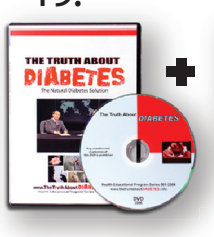

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- **Mood swings**
- **Insomnia**
- **"Foggy" thinking**
- **Heavy periods**
- **Breast tenderness**
- **Cyclic Headaches**
- **Fatigue**
- **Decreased Libido**
- **Weight gain (abdomen, hips, thighs)**

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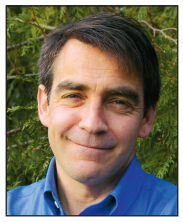

Dear Health Canada

DRUG BUST *Alan Cassels*

HEALTH

This year, I'm making a wish list and sending it to Health Canada instead of Santa.

It's not like I haven't got better things to do, but they asked for it. You see, last year, Health Canada created a committee tasked with advising the government on informing Canadians about the risks related to health products. The government named the committee the Expert Advisory Committee on the Vigilance of Health Products (or EAC-VHP, which I pronounce "Eek Vip"). The committee will meet in Ottawa on December 9 and attendees were asked to formulate their answers to the following three questions:

1) What is your role in risk communications? 2) What could Health Canada do to improve the distribution and reach of its risk communications? 3) How could we better measure the effectiveness and reach of these communications?

You might be wondering what "risk communications" is. If I may be so brazen as to translate Eek Vip's non-committal bureaucratese for a moment, what it is trying to say is that there is potential harm in taking drugs. Drugs can hurt you and they can even kill you. Frankly, when health agencies talk about "risk" (for example, when they refer to a drug's benefit/risk profile), they act as if the opposite of benefit is risk. It's not. The opposite of benefit is harm. So let's call things what they are. In this case, the real question is what can the regulator do to better ensure that the information about the harms of drugs gets out to Canadians.

For starters, my advice to Health Canada is simple: it needs to think like an alcoholic. That's right; recognize that it has a problem and get help.

Despite the many fine people employed at Health Canada, driven by the noblest of missions – to help Canadians maintain and improve their health – my sense is that they actually have no idea how poorly they communicate risk information to the very people they are supposed to be protecting. Clueless. My advice: start by admitting that Health Canada's communications activities on the drug harm file barely pierces the media clutter, and that professional help is required. How often have you raced to the Health Canada website when searching for drug safety information in Canada? Is our regulator top-of-mind when it comes to getting a complete picture of a drug's safety? Mmm, maybe not.

In terms of how to measure the "effectiveness of risk communications," Eek Vip recommends we consider the following questions: "How do we best measure the effectiveness (uptake, impact of our risk communications) and reach (extent of distribution) of Health Canada's risk communications to the public, the media and health professionals? How could we measure whether the right people are getting the right information at the right time?"

Despite the many fine people employed at Health Canada, driven by the noblest of missions – to help Canadians maintain and improve their health – my sense is that they actually have no idea how poorly they communicate risk information to the very people they are supposed to be protecting.

My advice here to Health Canada is also uncomplicated, bordering on the simplistic: think like a marketer. In other words, do what the drug companies do: spend money on what has proven to have an impact on physicians and patients – marketing and advertising – in order to maximize the impact of your messages. If you want to monitor whether your message is having any impact, why not look at the impact of your communications on drug sales? You need to talk to the "end users," the people who put the pill in their mouths. Find those people and engage them and make that engagement a daily part of the drug takers' life. And if you want to be as successful as the drug companies, use their metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of your messaging.

So in the spirit of giving some helpful advice to Eek Vip, I thought I'd send it some free ideas on how to advance drug safety in Canada:

A proper product monograph: If you buy a new car, you'll find an owner's manual in the glove box. Do you get one when you buy a new drug? Not in Canada, one of the few developed

countries in the world where there is no federally mandated or regulated patient-oriented leaflet that outlines the benefits, harms, side effects, etc, of your drug. The information you get from the pharmacy is largely unhelpful fluff. (We've studied these in detail so this is not just my fanciful opinion.) They don't provide the balanced information you need to take your drug safely. If you're going to take a drug for a test ride, I say you need a proper owner's manual.

Less volume, more meat: In terms of volume of communications, Health Canada produces a prodigious load of stuff and sends it out to consumers and health professionals. It issues public warnings and advisories, information updates, foreign product alerts and "Dear Doctor" letters (directed at health care professionals or hospitals) that come directly from the manufacturers of drugs. There are also product recall notices and the *Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter*, which you can sign up to receive by email. Does anyone read these? Do they make any difference? Does the volume of communications from Health Canada confuse and overwhelm? Why not send a single "Health Canada Drug Safety Update" newsletter once a month, packing it with every new thing they learn into that one issue?

More soundbites and tag lines. People learn through repetition, something every advertiser knows. Use simple, compelling messages that can be easily reinforced through repetition. Why is it that the prescribing of antipsychotic medications to elderly patients with dementia continues to increase despite warnings sent out by Health Canada? Why does antidepressant use in teenagers continue when the practice is thoroughly advised against? Is it because the regulatory warnings fail to deliver a clear action-oriented message to the public and health professionals? That's my reading of things. Why not issue a single, strong and provocative soundbite? "Hey Doc, don't use XXX drugs for old people or teenagers!" Follow up that headline with your more nuanced and complete message in smaller print.

Use a standard disclaimer: For any drug product, my preferred disclaimer would read something like this: "All drugs have the potential to harm you, make you sicker or even cause your death. There is no way to predict these potential harms with any certainty. You should always consider that any drug could cause a new health problem, a problem that may even be worse than the original complaint, which necessitated the first prescription. Reassess your drug regime with your physician at every visit."

Less broadcast, more narrowcast: If you send out a weak message to the entire public, you're wasting your time. Why not target your message to those doctors who prescribed the product in question? This can be done through provincial databases, which track prescribing, and it can be done in ways that guarantee confidentiality. This is especially important for new products when the information we have about their safety profile is abysmally inadequate.

Follow the money: One way to measure whether information about harms of products is reaching the public – and the physicians who prescribe those products – is to look at sales. If drug sales are going up, information about the harm related to the drug is either not reaching prescribers or they are not acting upon the information they have. Let's take the example of Avandia (rosiglitazone), one of the newest diabetes drugs on the market, and recently the subject of numerous warnings and advisories. Did the new risk information issued on that drug have an effect? We have seen sales decline, but is this a result of direct risk communications work commissioned by Health Canada or

continued p.29…

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Healthy holidays

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

Are you planning any festive gatherings that will include food? Beyond the traditional fare, do you wonder how to nourish the range of dietary choices among your circle of friends and family? Does your group include vegetarians, vegans, raw foods enthusiasts or someone whose health concerns require that they eat healthier food instead of just loading up on cholesterol, fat and sugar?

Here are a few tips along with two vegan, cholesterol-free, no-sugar-added recipes that are suitable for many people with food sensitivities (apart from nuts). The delicious cookies are entirely raw.

When you serve appetizers at events, include one or more packages of the seasoned types of hummus that are widely available in supermarket coolers. These protein-rich dips help many vegetarians fare well at festive events; they can be served with raw veggies, crackers and slices of fresh bread.

If your group is considering a restaurant, check out http://www.happycow.net or www.vegdining.com and type in your location.

Vesanto Melina is a BC-registered dietitian and co-author of the following nutrition classics: Becoming Vegan*, the* Food Allergy Survival Guide *and* Raising Vegetarian Children*.*
www.nutrispeak.com

Here are two vegan, cholesterol-free, no-sugar-added recipes that are suitable for many people with food sensitivities (apart from nuts). The delicious cookies are entirely raw.

Cashew and Vegetable Stir Fry

From *Becoming Vegetarian* by Vesanto Melina and Brenda Davis (Wiley Canada, 2003).

For this stir fry, we suggested specific vegetables, however, you can try others such as asparagus, cauliflower, Chinese greens, daikon radish, mung bean sprouts and mushrooms. For appealing textures in a stir fry, add the denser vegetables at the beginning for longer cooking. Add the more leafy vegetables at the end. Chinese or Thai chili garlic sauces (available at Oriental stores and many supermarkets) can be hot, so use more or less, as you prefer. Makes 4 cups (two servings). Recipe can be doubled.

Sauce
2 tbsp cashew butter or peanut butter
1-2 tbsp Chinese, Thai or other chili garlic sauce
1 tbsp tamari, Bragg Liquid Soy or soy sauce
1 tbsp water

Stir Fry
1/4 cup or more cashews
1 large red or white onion, sliced
2 tsp olive oil
1 large carrot, sliced diagonally
1 cup broccoli florets, chopped
1 red pepper, diced
1 cup bok choy or Chinese cabbage, chopped
1 cup snow pea pods

In small bowl, stir together cashew butter, chili garlic sauce, tamari and water to make a smooth paste. In a preheated hot wok or pan, cook onion in oil over high heat for 3 minutes or until beginning to brown. Add carrot and cook for 1 minute; add broccoli and cook for another 30 seconds; then add red pepper, bok choy and snow peas, cooking just long enough to heat through. Add sauce, stir to combine, sprinkle with cashews and serve over brown rice.

Sweet Nut'ins

From *The Raw Food Revolution Diet* by Cherie Soria, Brenda Davis and Vesanto Melina (Book Publishing Company, 2008).

Sweet Nut'ins are a perfect holiday cookie for all ages. Soaking improves the mouth feel and mineral availability of nuts. For dried fruit, use chopped, pitted dates or try any combination of dates, dried apricots, blueberries, cranberries, cherries and figs (with stems removed).
Makes about 2 dozen cookies

2 cups almonds, soaked for 8 hours, rinsed and drained
1 cup walnuts, soaked for 8 hours, rinsed and drained
3 cups dried fruit
1 tsp almond extract or 2 tsp orange zest (minced orange peel)

In a food processor outfitted with the "S" blade, grind the almonds and walnuts until coarsely chopped. Add the dried fruit and almond extract or zest; process until ingredients are thoroughly mixed. Using a tablespoon, form small balls and flatten these with your hand, making cookies about 1/2 inch thick and 2 inches in diameter. Enjoy these soft, chewy cookies immediately or store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer.

Variation: If you have a dehydrator, you can place the formed cookies on a tray lined with a non-stick sheet and dehydrate the cookies at 105 degrees F/40 C for 12 to 24 hours, depending on how crunchy you want them. These healthy treats make excellent gifts that can be safely mailed. They also freeze well.

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Raising a village one cup at a time

The forgotten people in the "Land of Smiles"

by John M. Darch

L to R: **Brother Wicha, Doi Chaang village leader Piko Saedoo, John M. Darch**

For more than three decades, I have been involved with numerous natural resource projects in North America, Africa and Asia, meeting many interesting (and sometimes unsavoury) people. None, however, compare with the intriguing and friendly Thais. Like most Western entrepreneurs in Thailand, I was mostly involved with the established business society. It was not until 2006 when my Thai friend Ponprapa Bunmusik introduced me to the Akha hill tribe people of Doi Chaang near Chiang Rai and I spent time with them that I began to understand their struggle for dignity and their desire to be more than a tourist attraction.

Their story seemed incredulous: a hill tribe living in Doi Chaang Village (primarily of Akha heritage) had, through sheer determination and dedication, created a viable business cultivating an outstanding quality coffee. I was surprised that coffee was even grown in Thailand, never mind that it was being achieved with no government assistance or donations.

I learned that the villagers wanted to expand their business internationally and my friend wondered if I would be interested in another Thai business venture. I agreed to meet them out of politeness and was introduced to Khun Wicha Promyong, the man responsible for leading the Akha tribe in their quest to be self-sufficient. Wicha, a former world-travelled entrepreneur, comes from southern Thailand and having enjoyed the privileges of education, healthcare and wealth, he gave all of it up more than 30 years ago to live and travel with Thailand's hill tribes. His home is now with "his people," the Akha hill tribe in Doi Chaang village and his "mission" is to help them have dignity and to become self-sustaining.

When we met in Bangkok, Wicha explained how the many hill tribes originally migrated from southwestern China, eventually settling in scattered, isolated communities in the mountainous regions of Laos, Vietnam and Northern Thailand. Apparently, at one time, the hill tribes of Northern Thailand sustained themselves through slash and burn horticulture, but the increased population of the last century depleted the land and many of the hill tribes resorted to cultivating opium for survival.

Rich in culture and tradition, shrouded in myth and legend, the Akha people have no official written language, but maintain a detailed, oral history and live life according to the "Akha Way," a spiritual, moral and social philosophy that governs behaviour and emphasizes strong ties to land and family. Yet, of all the hill tribes, few were as downtrodden, shunned or as impoverished as the Akha people.

Arriving at Doi Chaang village (literal translation: Elephant Mountain), I was expecting the familiar destitute village that had become the symbol of the typical hill tribe community. However, here was an energetic farming community, complete with rudimentary electricity, running water, a school and a medical clinic. Some 20 years ago, in the hope of steering hill tribes away from cultivating opium, His Majesty the King of Thailand directed the farmers be given coffee plants. Sadly, because the farmers were acting independently and were inexperienced in business practice, their lives barely improved. To sell his beans, each farmer had to transport them some 70 kilometres to Chiang Rai, the nearest city, where the international coffee dealers kept the farmers divided and paid them minimal prices. In frustration, the Akha villagers turned to Wicha, who lived in Chiang Rai, for help. As a first step, Wicha encouraged all the Doi Chaang farmers to become a co-operative, thereby making it impossible for the coffee dealers to play one family against another. His next focus was educating the farmers in the importance of quality and productivity. In just over six years, this once small, isolated, poor village was transformed.

It is important to understand that these people do not want charity, but a fair price for their coffee. The Akha farmers told me they want people to buy their coffee for the "quality," not out of sympathy.

In my meeting with Wicha, he pointed out where clear-cut sections from past farming practice are now being reforested with a variety of trees, bushes and plants. The reforestation supports the production of various crops, which not only provide food, but are also sold to help support and diversify the village's economy. This cultivation method maintains soil quality, as the canopy protects against the sun and the rain and eliminates the need for continuous weeding and the use of harmful chemicals. The

result is rich, fertile soil that sustains diverse crop production for present and future generations.

I couldn't help but feel somewhat guilty. My own business ventures have been in natural resource development where the resources are eventually depleted, projects with a finite life that has inevitable consequences for employees and their families. I was now presented with a business that could expand without depleting resources or exploiting workers and their families. So what did the people want with me? Wicha didn't ask me for money and I didn't offer. Instead, he wanted a business relationship for his people. As I learned, Doi Chaang's success was such that production had exceeded demand in Thailand, and Wicha, forever the visionary, wanted me to introduce their coffee to the North American market. There were two conditions: to ensure the villagers' self-esteem, their coffee had to be sold under the name Doi Chaang (Elephant Mountain) and the label had to bear the words "single-origin."

Traditional handcrafted Akha Silver Headdress for ceremonial occasions such as marriage and harvest.

It is important to understand that these people do not want charity, but a fair price for their coffee. The Akha farmers told me they want people to buy their coffee for the "quality," not out of sympathy, as beyond improving their lifestyle; the most important thing to these people is respect and recognition of their achievements.

Wicha told me that international investors and coffee buyers constantly approach these people, looking to invest and control their coffee production. Their intent is to blend the beans with other coffees and market them under a different name because "Doi Chaang" sounds too ethnic. The potential buyers argue that they must have control and that it would be too expensive and difficult to market internationally a single-origin, Arabica coffee from Thailand, essentially unknown outside Asia.

I was captivated and immediately contacted Wayne Fallis, a colleague in Canada with extensive experience in food exporting and importing. I convinced him that I had found a project that would offer more than a financial return. We then sought the opinion of Calgary-based, Shawn MacDonald, well known for his extensive knowledge of coffee. MacDonald not only confirmed that Doi Chaang Coffee was a "world class" coffee, but he agreed to join our venture as Roast Master and vice-president of operations. And so we began what is probably a unique business arrangement in the coffee world. The farmers maintain total ownership and control of their own Thai company and domestic sales. In addition, they would also have a "carried" 50 percent interest in the Vancouver and Calgary based Canadian company, Doi Chaang Coffee Company, created to roast and distribute Doi Chaang coffee in North America. My colleague and I agreed to personally provide 100 percent of the finance required for all aspects of the Canadian operation leaving the hill tribe to focus on production, quality control and expansion.

This structure provides the hill tribe people with a no-lose business arrangement. We buy the green beans from the farmers, for cash, at a price in excess of the recommended price, which gives them an immediate profit and the ability to continue their coffee production. And because of the ownership in Doi Chaang Coffee Company, they also receive 50 percent of the Canadian company's profits without any cost to them.

I am proud of how the Akha farmers use their coffee revenues to improve the standard of living for their community and the quality of their coffee. Having been isolated and impoverished for so long, they are now recognized and praised for their achievements, held up by Thailand officials as a "role model" for other hill tribe communities. In 2007, the farmers demonstrated their commitment to their community by building the Doi Chaang Coffee Academy, at their own expense. All hill tribe farmers may attend at no cost to learn about co-operative business practices, diverse crop production, quality control and sustainable agriculture. The farmers are also taught personal money management skills and the importance of education and healthcare. The ultimate goal is for the hill tribes to be accepted and welcomed as productive, contributing members of Thai society.

I am determined to make Doi Chaang Coffee a success in North America because I strongly believe that this is an alternative and viable way of doing business with the coffee farmers. I believe in the Akha hill tribe's courage to persevere and I believe in their determination to better themselves and take control of their own future. I believe in their children, their community, their potential and their ability to sustain and grow their own business without any negative impact on their culture, community or environment.

John Darch is the chairman of Doi Chaang Coffee in Canada. www.doichaangcoffee.com

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Letters to the editor

Truce not war

Thank you very much for the article about the events that took place on December 24, 1914 [*Remembering war*, Geoff Olson, November 2008]. It's a very beautiful and inspirational piece and the question of where to mark events like December 24, 1914, on the calendar is so important. I think many more people are asking this question these days. I'd rather be taking part in celebrating "Christmas Truce" day rather than romanticizing the loss of young lives to wars. Thanks again.
– Alex Rojkov

Food Matters a must-see

There are many things that I am still not sure of, but one thing I know for sure: we all live on the same common ground called Mother Earth and we all rely on the same air, water and food supply. Alarm bells have been ringing for centuries and we have refused the wake-up call to start treasuring this Earth. Now, two individuals have produced and directed an incredible documentary in their attempt to wake us up once again to the dangers that lurk within our food and what we must do about it. Please take this wake up call seriously. I encourage everyone who cares about their own health and the future of this planet to get their hands on a copy of *Food Matters*. Watch it, pay attention and pass it on to as many people as you can. Go to www.foodmatters.tv to get a copy or copies of this powerful film. Please do your part to help yourself and others take charge of their health. Doctors treat illness; wellness is our right and responsibility and the food we eat and the lifestyle we choose do matter. My deepest gratitude to James Colquhoun and Laurentine ten Bosch for their dedication and to all those who spoke so truthfully in this documentary. I will be equally dedicated in doing my part to get this information out to the world. [*Common Ground* published an interview with James and Laurentine in the October 2008 issue.]
– Bonnie Friesen

We all live on the same common ground called Mother Earth and we all rely on the same air, water and food supply.

San Francisco artist looks to replace lost eyeball with webcam

Tanya Vlach, who lost an eye in a 2005 car accident, thinks installing a Web cam into her prosthesis would be quite a sight. A one-eyed San Francisco artist wants to replace her missing eye with a Web cam - and tech experts say it's possible.

"I'd always given thought to using cameras to restore sight to the blind," said Dr. William Danz, whose patient, Tanya Vlach, wants the groundbreaking device. "This is a little different, more like James Bond stuff." Vlach, who lost her eye in a 2005 car accident, wears a realistic acrylic prosthesis, but she's issued a challenge to engineers on her blog: build an "eye cam" for her prosthesis that can dilate with changes of light and allow her to blink to control its zoom, focus, and on/off switch.

"There have been all sorts of cyborgs in science fiction for a long time, and I'm sort of a sci-fi geek," said Vlach, 35. "With the advancement of technology, I thought, 'Why not?'"

The eye cam could allow her to record her entire life or even shoot a reality TV show from her eye's perspective. Vlach said she will let inspiration strike once she has the device. "There are a lot of ideas floating around... nothing too exploitative," said Vlach. "I don't want to be a spy and infringe on people's rights, and at the same time, there are amazing possibilities." Vlach's challenge, first reported by tech blogger Kevin Kelly, has inspired blog posts from around the world and e-mails to Vlach from dozens of eager engineers.

Mobile computing expert Roy Want told the Daily News the technology exists. "It is possible to build a wireless camera with the dimensions of the eyeball," said Want, a senior principal engineer at Intel. "You can find spy cams or nanny cams designed to fit into inconspicuous places in the home."

Want said the camera, which would be encased in Vlach's prosthesis to avoid moisture, could link wirelessly to a smart phone. The smart phone could send power to the camera wirelessly and relay the camera's video feed by cell phone network to another person, a TV studio or a computer.

In a world where eye cams are common, they might serve as a kind of computerized backup to people's memories, Want said. "You'd never need to forget anything again," he said. "You'd never lose anything. You could ask it, 'Where was the last time I saw my keys?'"
– Joe Gould, Daily News writer

continued p.17...

Support the food declaration

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

The ways we grow, distribute and prepare food should celebrate our various cultures and our shared humanity.

I never thought I'd see the day when one man could make such an enormous difference to the planet. We have just begun a new era of politics where, out of necessity, the people will now drive the agenda. The most powerful nation in the world – the one that contributes most to climate change and war – now has an administration willing to listen and respond to the needs of the people. There's really only one thing left for the people to do: to decide what the future looks like so we may move there smoothly and easily.

A brilliant start can be found at www.fooddeclaration.org, a US website that has initiated a Declaration for Healthy Food and Agriculture. Will you sign up? The Declaration follows:

We, the undersigned, believe that a healthy food system is necessary to meet the urgent challenges of our time. Behind us stands a half-century of industrial food production, underwritten by cheap fossil fuels, abundant land and water resources and a drive to maximize the global harvest of cheap calories. Ahead lie rising energy and food costs, a changing climate, declining water supplies, a growing population and the paradox of widespread hunger and obesity.

These realities call for a radically different approach to food and agriculture. We believe that the food system must be reorganized on a foundation of health: for our communities, for people, for animals and for the natural world. The quality of food, and not just its quantity, ought to guide our agriculture. The ways we grow, distribute and prepare food should celebrate our various cultures and our shared humanity, providing not only sustenance, but justice, beauty and pleasure.

Governments have a duty to protect people from malnutrition, unsafe food and exploitation, and to protect the land and water on which we depend from degradation. Individuals, producers and organizations have a duty to create regional systems that can provide healthy food for their communities. We all have a duty to respect and honour the labourers of the land without whom we could not survive. The changes we call for here have begun, but the time has come to accelerate the transformation of our food and agriculture and make its benefits available to all.

ORGANICS

We believe that the following twelve principles should frame food and agriculture policy, to ensure that it will contribute to the health and wealth of the nation and the world. A healthy food and agriculture policy:

1. Forms the foundation of secure and prosperous societies, healthy communities and healthy people.

2. Provides access to affordable, nutritious food to everyone.

3. Prevents the exploitation of farmers, workers and natural resources; the domination of genomes and markets; and the cruel treatment of animals, by any nation, corporation or individual.

4. Upholds the dignity, safety and quality of life for all who work to feed us.

5. Commits resources to teach children the skills and knowledge essential to food production, preparation, nutrition and enjoyment.

6. Protects the finite resources of productive soils, fresh water and biological diversity.

7. Strives to remove fossil fuel from every link in the food chain and replace it with renewable resources and energy.

8. Originates from a biological rather than an industrial framework.

9. Fosters diversity in all its relevant forms: diversity of domestic and wild species; diversity of foods, flavours and traditions; diversity of ownership.

10. Requires a national dialogue concerning technologies used in production and allows regions to adopt their own respective guidelines on such matters.

11. Enforces transparency so that citizens know how their food is produced, where it comes from and what it contains.

12. Promotes economic structures and supports programs to nurture the development of just and sustainable regional farm and food networks.

Our pursuit of healthy food and agriculture unites us as people and as communities, across geographic boundaries and social and economic lines. We pledge our votes, our purchases, our creativity and our energies to this urgent cause.

Carolyn Herriot is author of A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide. *www.gardenwise.ca.*

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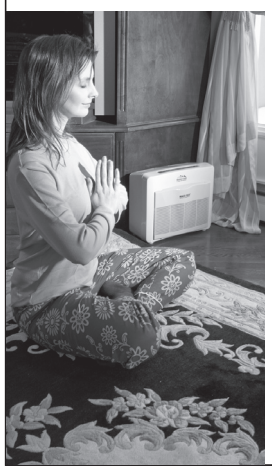

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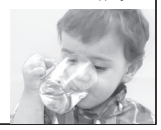

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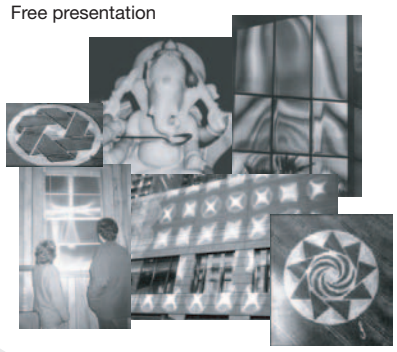

In the 1990s, *Time* magazine declared that the past few years had been an *Age of Miracles*, as media reports from all over the world documented unexplained healings and phenomena.

Accomplished artist-writer and humanitarian, Josephine Harrison created a traveling exhibition from these reports, with photographs and some personal accounts. She will give a brief introduction, suggesting possible causes of the miraculous phenomena, with updates.

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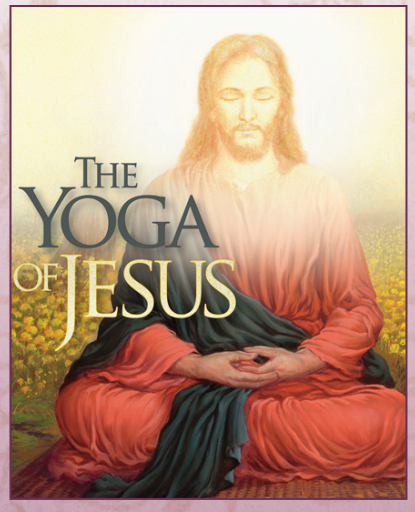

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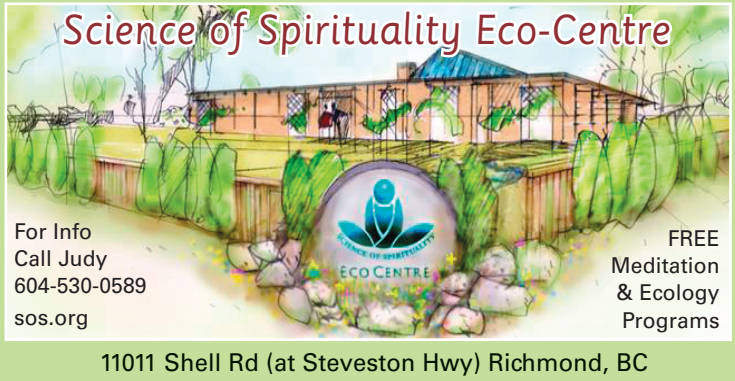

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Choose happiness

THE POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

SPIRITUALITY

Would you choose unhappiness? If you did not choose it, how did it arise? What is its purpose? Who is keeping it alive? You say that you are conscious of your unhappy feelings, but the truth is that you are identified with them and keep the process alive through compulsive thinking. All that is unconscious.

If you were conscious, that is to say totally present in the Now, all negativity would dissolve almost instantly. It could not survive in your presence. It can only survive in your absence. Even the pain-body cannot survive for long in your presence. You keep your unhappiness alive by giving it time. That is its lifeblood. Remove time through intense present-moment awareness and it dies. But do you want it to die? Have you truly had enough? Who would you be without it?

Until you practise surrender, the spiritual dimension is something you read about, talk about, get excited about, write books about, think about, believe in or don't, as the case may be. It makes no difference. Not until you surrender does it become a living reality in your life. When you do, the energy that you emanate and which then runs your life is of a much higher vibrational frequency than the mind energy that still runs our world – the energy that created the existing social, political and economic structures of our civilization, and which also continuously perpetuates itself through our educational systems and the media.

Through surrender, spiritual energy comes into this world. It creates no suffering on the planet. Unlike mind energy, it does not pollute the Earth and it is not subject to the law of polarities, which dictates that nothing can exist without its opposite, that there can be no good without bad. Those who run on mind energy, which is still the vast majority of the Earth's population, remain unaware of the existence of spiritual energy. It belongs to a different order of reality and will create a different world when a sufficient number of humans enter the surrendered state and so become totally free of negativity. If the Earth is to survive, this will be the energy of those who inhabit it.

Jesus referred to this energy when he made his famous prophetic statement in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the gentle; they shall have the earth for their possession." It is a silent, but intense, presence that dissolves the unconscious patterns of the mind. They may still remain active for a while, but they won't run your life anymore. The external conditions that were being resisted also tend to shift or dissolve quickly through surrender. It is a powerful transformer of situations and people. If conditions do not shift immediately, your acceptance of the Now enables you to rise above them. Either way, you are free.

Through surrender, spiritual energy comes into this world. Unlike mind energy, it does not pollute the Earth and it is not subject to the law of polarities.

It is true that only an unconscious person will try to use or manipulate others, but it is equally true that only an unconscious person can be used and manipulated. If you resist or fight unconscious behaviour in others, you become unconscious yourself. But surrender doesn't mean that you allow yourself to be used by unconscious people. Not at all. It is perfectly possible to say "no" firmly and clearly or to walk away from a situation and be in a state of complete inner non-resistance at the same time. When you say "no" to a person or a situation, let it come not from reaction, but from insight, from a clear realization of what is right or not right for you at that moment. Let it be a nonreactive "no," a high-quality "no," a "no" that is free of all negativity and so creates no further suffering.

If you cannot surrender, take action immediately: speak up or do something to bring about a change in the situation or remove yourself from it. Take responsibility for your life. Do not pollute your beautiful, radiant inner Being or the Earth with negativity. Do not give unhappiness in any form whatsoever a dwelling place inside you.

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Conscious communication

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

The single, biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. – George Bernard Shaw

By the age of two, most humans are learning how to talk. However, some people can go a lifetime without ever learning to really communicate. Communication is one of the biggest problems between couples and between parents and teens. While there may be a lot of talking going on, it is often "talking at" rather than "talking with."

The word communication comes from the word "commune," which means to be in a state of intimate, heightened sensitivity and receptivity, as with one's surroundings.

Humans are gifted with the ability to share meaning. This happens best when there is a heightened sensitivity and receptivity to what the other is saying. We see this during the honeymoon stage of a new relationship when both people hang on to each other's every word and intimacy develops as each person shows real understanding of the other. To truly see and know another is the deepest of all intimacies.

Of course, it is ego that gets in the way. When it has its own agenda, it is not so interested in another's point of view. Think how present and responsive we can be when listening to the trials of a friend. We have no real vested interest in how he or she views the situation or chooses to respond. We simply want to be there for them and lend support.

However, dealing with a spouse or teen when there is a difference of opinion is another matter entirely. The ability to listen with a supportive and receptive ear somehow disappears as ego is immediately on guard. Ready to attack or defend, there is no time for ego to take up the cause of the opponent.

Ego assumes power and what began as differing points of view becomes a win/lose contest. It is now about challenging the views of the other and making him or her wrong. Ego must do this for if the other is right, then ego is wrong and ego will not stand for that. Ego will argue for its "rightness" even in the face of evidence to the contrary. Fairness, respect and validation of the other go out the window.

Often, this is a long-standing pattern and two people will fall into it almost unconsciously without realizing it has happened. Interestingly, even though both are contributing to the negative process, each person will blame the other for being difficult. Unquestionably, the relationship suffers and the partners will not have the trust and closeness they undoubtedly both desire.

There is a way out, however. It requires a conscious shift and staying conscious regardless of what the other person says or does. It helps to set a goal of always making the relationship more important than the issue and to then establish an agreed upon process to use when discussing an issue. For example, the agreement might be that each person states his or her case without interruption or interrogation and the listener repeats back the essence of what was said to ensure accurate understanding.

The word communication comes from the word "commune," which means to be in a state of intimate, heightened sensitivity and receptivity.

Once both sides of the issue are understood, it is not about trying to convince the other to agree or give in. This will only lead back to arguing and the accompanying negativity. Rather, the next task is to work together to find a compromise or solution that will work. Whereas, in the old way, each person merely reiterated his viewpoint and perhaps denigrated the other with escalating intensity, in the new way, once each person has stated their case, there is a shift: having heard my way and your way, we now work as a team to find a "third way."

This takes practice and mutual cooperation. If the process starts to derail, it needs a time out. Reminding each other that the relationship is more important than the issue and refusing to let ego jump in and take you out of integrity will assist in establishing a higher road.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. *For articles and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca.*

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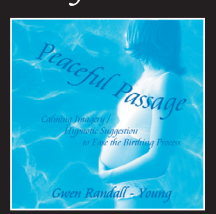

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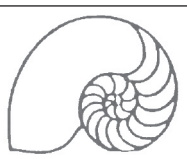

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Wellness Centered Dentistry

the gift of sight

by Heather Wardle

A 15-minute cataract surgery that costs only $50 restores sight and completely transforms someone's life.

In a small corner of a district hospital in Tibet, 12-year-old Datso sat crying. She was blind from bilateral cataracts, the clouding of the eye's natural lens. Datso's short life had been miserable and lonely. "I am blind and don't deserve any friends," she sobbed. "I am not capable of doing anything but sitting in my home with my grandparents all the time. Nobody is willing to play with me. I can't see now and I am afraid that I won't see ever again in my life."

Thanks to the kindness of strangers in Canada, Datso received sight-restoring cataract surgery at a Seva Canada-sponsored eye camp in Tibet. Seva Canada is an international, non-governmental organization in Vancouver whose mission is the elimination of preventable and treatable blindness.

In Sanskrit, *seva* means "service" or "compassion in action." For more than 26 years, Seva has been helping poor countries help themselves by creating sustainable eye care systems. Seva now works in seven countries – Tibet, Nepal, India, Tanzania, Guatemala, Cambodia and Egypt – training local eye-care specialists.

Datso is one of 314 million people worldwide with serious vision impairment. Of these, 45 million are blind and 124 million have low vision. Yet 75 percent of this blindness is either preventable or treatable. Often, a 15-minute cataract surgery that costs only $50 will restore sight and completely transform someone's life.

photo by Kathy Murphy

Drew Lyall, Seva's youngest donor.

After her two eye surgeries, Datso was a changed girl. She was free to lead a normal life, see her loved ones, play with friends, go to school and be happy. "I feel like doing everything now," she said laughing, "but first of all, I need to see my one-month-old brother at home!"

One kind Canadian who has given many gifts of sight is a remarkable 10-year-old boy named Drew Lyall from Kimberley, BC. Drew first heard about Seva Canada's sight restoration and blindness prevention work in 2006 when he saw a Seva multimedia show in Kimberley. Since then, Drew has raised more than $1,500 for Seva Canada to fund eye surgeries and training in Asia and Africa.

To raise money, Drew has collected thousands of cans and bottles for recycling, often dragging them on his toboggan through the winter snows. Now that his local bottle depot has burned down, Drew is fundraising through local craft fairs and school talks. Drew has a heart of gold. He is full of compassion for those who are blind and he is tireless in his fundraising efforts. He's paid for a Tibetan eye surgeon to get specialist training in Nepal, funded sight restoration for a child in Tanzania and introduced Seva to many people.

Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, is an Honourable Patron of Seva Canada. "During the last 26 years, Seva has helped to restore the sight of many thousands of people who suffer needlessly from blindness that is both preventable and treatable," says Dr. Axworthy. "I am exceptionally proud to be associated with the work of Seva Canada."

Heather Wardle is the development director of Seva Canada Society. www.seva.ca.

INSPIRATION

Saving sight on the roof of the world

Tibetan eye camps are miraculous events. Hundreds of blind patients are brought by their families, sometimes travelling for days. They are led-in blind and after a 15-minute surgery costing about $50 can see again.

Tibet has one of the highest rates of blindness in the world, primarily caused by cataracts. Seva Canada is the leading eye-care provider in Tibet, responsible for two-thirds of the cataract surgeries.

"Cataract surgery in adults is just wonderful. It's the best bang for your buck operation in the world," says ophthalmologist and Seva board member Dr. Peter Nash.

Mobile eye camps provide a way to reach the blind in remote areas. Each year, Seva runs as many as 25 eye camps, costing around $12,500 each. Each camp screens hundreds of people of all ages and performs up to 400 sight-restoring cataract surgeries.

Dekyi, a blind woman with six children to

care for, received the gift of sight in October at a Seva eye camp in Chamdo. "For the first time in my life, I am happy," she told the doctors. "Please tell all the people at Seva. They are the ones who have helped me end my bad karma and bring a glimpse of light to my life!"

This holiday season, choose to give the gift of sight. Visit www.seva.ca or call 604-713-6622 for information and to request a copy of Seva's Gift of Sight catalogue, an alternative giving guide. You can give the gift of sight on behalf of family members, friends and business associates. With each gift, Seva will send a card describing your gift to the person you wish to honour.

...Letters to the Editor continued from p. 12

Gates and MacKay statements disingenuous

Neither Defence Minister Peter MacKay nor U. S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates were straightforward or candid in their statements regarding Friday's day-long meeting of defence ministers from the U.S., Britain, Holland, Australia, Estonia, Denmark and Romania. MacKay called upon NATO countries he considers slackers because they have placed caveats on their forces that prevent them from being deployed in combat areas to remove them. He knows their decisions are based on public opinion just as was his government's decision to be out of combat in 2011. Why would Germany, Italy and France alter their positions because of Obama when he says we won't?

Gates must consider the media to be naive (another meaning of disingenuous) in saying "that despite the violence, coalition forces remain in control of the country." and that "the Taliban do not hold any land".

A year ago the Senlis Council reported "Taliban in Control of 54 Percent of Afghanistan". Conditions have worsened since then when it was concluded that "The Taliban are the de facto governing authority in significant portions of territory in the south and east, and are starting to control parts of the local economy and key infrastructure such as roads and energy supply."

An Aug. 6, 2008 **(AP)** article stated, " Sometimes villagers go to the Taliban because their courts move faster and appear less corrupt, experts said. But at other times, in Taliban strongholds, people are afraid to turn anywhere else."

Gates is down playing Taliban strength because in his words "The most important objective for us for 2009 in Afghanistan is a successful election," Mr. Gates said. "One of the things we talked about his morning was trying to surge as many forces as we can prior to the election, to try and provide a secure environment for the election."

"Many politicians and party leaders of the country are concerned by the fact that the instability in Afghanistan will negatively affect the election process. The experts say that holding elections in the country is impossible under the situation, when the security is not ensured, and serious measures are not undertaken with regards to the opposition, who speak against the power."

The election is proceeding. Gates aim is for it to be seen as a being successful. Whether his "spin" that the Taliban is weaker than it is will be an assist is yet to be determined.

– Joe Hueglin, former PC MP, Niagara Falls, Joe.hueglin@bellnet.ca

Is Pristine Power exec misleading public?

Harvie Campbell, an industry insider with Pristine Power, wrote in a Vancouver Sun guest editorial Nov. 21 that BC buys expensive peaking power at spot market prices, which is not true. We buy coal and nuclear power from Alberta and Washington when it is cheap at night and resell it to California the next day, during peak demand, when we can make an average 500% profit in less than 24 hours.

He uses numerous statements to justify privatizing of BC Hydro. We have been making as much as $500 million a year reselling imported power. The position Harvie takes is based on the same lie that BC Energy Minister Richard Neufeld keeps repeating to convince us we MUST develop private power.

When we check the figures we find these people are wrong. While coal and nuclear are dirty and unsustainable, they are not uneconomical as Harvie Campbell and the BC government are claiming.

It must be repeated of course that the BC Liberals passed legislation to put BC Hydro out of business regarding new power projects, now bein built by private concerns at much higher prices. Accenture, BCTC, Powerex, and the private power projects are all designed to move BC Hydro to privatization.

When the governor of California was here recently it was to buy our power, not for some insignificant but high profile hydrogen highway. PG&E spent $16 million alone, planning how to move more BC power to California.

– A.B. Hansen, Vancouver, BC

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This is your moment

EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

ENVIRONMENT

We live in exciting times. We don't need to pray for the day when real change will start rolling. It's rolling *now* so don't pass this one up! Things may seem sleepy in Canada, but don't kid yourself. Just because the government in Ottawa is stuck in the 1950s, it doesn't mean the rest of us have to be.

What does it mean to wake up and join in? The answer to this question is unique to you, whether you are reading this in a café, on the bus, in the bath or over the breakfast table. I may be writing for a quarter-million *Common Ground* readers, but, in reality, I'm writing for just one person – and that's *you.*

Story #1. In 1995, Josep Puig, a Green Party city councillor in Barcelona, Spain, worked with the city staff to install solar hot water panels at City Hall. He then worked with local builders and the city to craft a bylaw that required all large new buildings in the city to install solar hot water. The bylaw was copied by other towns in Catalonia, then by Madrid, and in 2006 solar hot water panels were made compulsory for new and renovated buildings throughout Spain. One man, supported by good partners, kick-started Spain's solar revolution.

Story #2. In 2002, Felix Kramer, an entrepreneur and market strategist in Palo Alto, California, founded a group called CalCars with the goal of bringing clean, advanced vehicles to market much faster than the major car companies. In September 2004, the group converted a Toyota Prius into a plug-in, hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) that could run on batteries for the first 60 to 80 miles. They then showed people what they had done. By 2007, Ford, Toyota and GM were all planning to have PHEVs on the road by 2010, and in October 2008, $1 billion was assigned to advance the development of PHEVs in the $700 billion bank bailout. One man, supported by a group of very geeky software engineers, is changing the automobile industry globally. See www.calcars.org

Story #3. In September 2003, Cindi Seddon, principal of Pitt River Middle School in Coquitlam, BC, decided to ditch the junk food that KFC, McDonald's and Pizza Hut were serving in the school cafeteria, replacing it with real food for her students. She also turfed junk food out of the vending machines. She had solid support from her parent committees and staff, but the Coquitlam School Board thought otherwise and ordered the junk food back on the menu, claiming it had that authority and she did not. Cindi's actions triggered a media storm and a public debate and, as a result, in 2007, the province banned highly processed foods and foods with large amounts of sweetener, salt, fat and calories from school cafeterias and vending machines. If Cindi had not decided enough was enough, our kids would still be eating junk food in BC schools today.

If Cindi had not decided enough was enough, our kids would still be eating junk food in BC schools today.

Somewhere in your unfolding life there may be a story like this that will be *your* story. It may begin with someone knocking on your door, asking, "Can you help us?" Or it may come from within as a quiet idea and a sprig of determination.

You don't need to know *how* you're going to achieve your idea. You can learn as you go along. You need just three things: 1) A clear image in your mind of what the end result will be. 2) The skills to pull it off, which probably include people skills and partnership-building skills. 3) The willingness to put one foot in front of the other and to keep going when you meet obstacles, seeking help and advice from your partners. If your first thought is "I don't have the skills," go out and get them. You won't regret it.

Do *you* have a small voice, saying, "I really want to contribute to a better world, and I've got this idea…?"

If you do, don't pass it up. This is your moment.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org) and author of the award-winning book Cancer: 101 Solutions to a Preventable Epidemic *(New Society Publishers, 2007). www.earthfuture.com*

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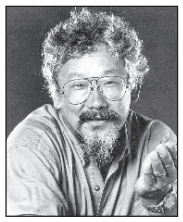

Blowin' in the wind

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

Energy underpins everything we do. Human societies have become increasingly complex, requiring ever larger-scale sources of continuous energy. Now, energy fuels not only our activities, but our economies as well. If we don't choose our energy sources wisely, we can do more harm than good.

Non-renewable energy sources such as fossil and nuclear fuels are not sustainable and have also taught us that technological advances often come at great cost. These fuels can never be a long-term solution because they will run out. They also create emissions that pollute our air, water and soil and contribute to global warming or long-term radioactive waste problems.

Renewable energy sources will not run out and they don't cause the same kinds of environmental problems as non-renewables. But that doesn't mean we should adopt renewable energy carelessly. Biofuels can create problems if fuel production comes at the expense of food production. And wind power, if not properly planned and sited, can harm birds and bats (although Danish studies of 10,000 bird kills revealed that almost all died in collisions with buildings, cars and wires; only 10 were killed by windmills).

Alternative energy sources are absolutely necessary. Global warming will kill birds and bats, as well as other species, in much greater numbers than wind power. We need to believe in our ability to develop solutions. During three decades of producing the TV program *The Nature of Things*, we've often encountered difficulties filming in exotic locations. Back when we worked with film, we always took a lighting person with us. I dreaded working with one lighting guy because whenever he was faced with a demanding challenge, he'd respond, "It can't be done." We'd have to cajole him until we accomplished the task, but it drained the crew's morale and wore us down. Another lighting person would respond, "Well, this is a tough one, but let's give it a try."

The mental attitude that underlies the way we approach any challenge is a huge part of how well we deal with it. For more than 20 years, leading scientists have warned us that the dangers of runaway global warming are so great that we cannot continue along the same path. Yet the response (usually led by the fossil-fuel industry) has been "It's junk science" or "It's too expensive; it'll destroy the economy" or "It's impossible to meet the reduction targets." These kinds of reactions demoralize or paralyze society.

Compare those comments on the challenge of climate change with the American response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor or the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik 1. There was a sense of solidarity of purpose, to win the war or to beat the Russians to the moon. Throwing everything at winning led to all kinds of unexpected bonuses: the American economy blazed out of the Depression, while the race to the moon resulted in the Internet, 24-hour news channels, GPS and cell phones. Making a commitment to resolve a serious crisis generates opportunities and creates jobs.

Even the U.S. Energy Department has concluded that wind power could become the source of one fifth of that nation's power by 2030.

Already, renewable-energy technologies are creating employment and giving economies a boost around the world. Countries like Denmark and Germany started shifting to renewable energy sources after the OPEC oil embargo in the 1970s. Today, Denmark obtains 20 percent of its energy from wind power and is aiming at 50 percent by 2020. Germany, which obtains 14 percent of its energy from wind, is the major exporter of wind technology and has created more than 82,000 jobs in the wind sector and more than 200,000 renewable-energy jobs in total. Wind power has become the country's fastest growing job creator over the past three decades.

Even the U.S. Energy Department believes that wind power could provide one fifth of that nation's power by 2030. Other studies have shown that wind, solar and biofuel energy could create five million US jobs by 2030.

The problem with the climate challenge is not a lack of solutions; it is a lack of will. As we saw with our lighting technicians, our attitude toward what confronts us will have a huge impact on how we achieve results.

Take David Suzuki's Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

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From scarcity to abundance

by Geoff Olson

Many of us consider philosophy to be a specialized field of study, with little real-world application. Yet we're all philosophers of one kind or another. We all have our own ideas about love, freedom and the meaning of life – or its non-meaning. These ideas, though not always articulated, often guide our lives to a surprising degree.

Just as fish don't have any notion of the medium they swim in, one particular belief system so thoroughly pervades our culture that most of us would be hard-pressed to identify it as a philosophy at all. This is the notion that life is defined by a competition for dwindling resources. The philosophy of scarcity has dominated cultural life in the West – and academia, business, government, the military and beyond – for the past few hundred years and pervades everything from PBS nature documentaries to reality television shows like *The Apprentice* and the *Survivor* series. Its essence is summed up by hard-nosed realists and their dictum "There is no free lunch."

As a philosophy, scarcity is given substance by real-world examples. Oil, water, food, money: all appear to be in perennially short supply, as expressed by the recent meme, "peak everything." Famine, drought and wars over territory make scarcity seem the norm for the planet, rather than the exception. But how much is our perception of scarcity driven by a cultural consensus that it is fundamental to existence? There is a real world out there, a world that often fails to deliver us the goods, but there's no denying that our relationship to it is conditioned by our beliefs and interpretations.

For some time now, a different idea has been brewing in popular culture: the philosophy of non-scarcity, or abundance. The exploration of this idea, however, has been mostly limited to extropians and science fiction writers and ignored by academia. "Abundance" has been a word relegated to evangelical and new age groups.

In his blog, *Wired* editor Chris Anderson noted this absence from academic dialogue: "My college textbook, Gregory Mankiw's otherwise excellent *Principles of Economics*, doesn't mention the word abundance. And for good reason: if you let the scarcity term in most economic equations go to nothing, you get all sorts of divide-by-zero problems. They basically blow up."

One of the greatest shifts in human thinking came with the discovery that the world was not flat, but round. This implied that the finite globe could be circumnavigated and its territories mapped and conquered. In the early 1600s, Queen Elizabeth founded the East India Company, a mammoth trading monopoly that was given charter rights to create proprietary colonies anywhere on Earth. The East India Company was both the Halliburton and Blackwater of its time. It mapped out and mopped up the resources of distant lands, while encouraging the inhabitants to become pious, proto-Britons, or at least compliant widgets in its worldwide labour machine.

Lieutenant Fletcher Prouty, author of *The Secret Team*, notes how the East India Company founded Haileybury College in England to "train its young employees in business, the military arts, and the special skills of religious missionaries. By 1800, it became necessary to initiate the task of making an Earth inventory, that is, to find out what was out there in the way of natural resources, population, land, and other tangible assets."

The first man put in charge of this vital census was Robert Malthus, head of the department of economics at Haileybury College. He is remembered today as the prophet of scarcity, author of the enormously influential 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population*. In this treatise, he proposed, "Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetic ratio."

In other words, unchecked population growth always exceeds the growth of means of subsistence. In modern parlance, we call it the "carrying capacity of the environment." The actual population growth is held in place by "positive checks" – starvation, disease and other disasters – and "preventive checks" – postponement of marriage, contraception and other practices that reduce the birth rate.

A certain young naturalist, having recently returned to England from the Galapagos Islands, had an ah-ha moment when he came across Malthus' essay. Surely, constraints on population acted as the driver of animal adaptation through a "survival of the fittest." Charles Darwin introduced his revolutionary theory of evolution through natural selection with the 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species*.

Both Malthus and Darwin have received a bad rap over time. But the problem wasn't so much with the signal as the reception. Malthusians and Darwinists didn't just seize on the new thinking to justify the status quo; they found entirely new ways to rational-

ize brutality. The monstrous legacy of eugenics in the US and Germany, along with the pseudoscientific justifications for racial desegregation and the sterilization of "mental defectives" – to say nothing of the "ethnic cleansing" – owe much to self-serving interpretations of Malthusian/Darwinian ideas. And, of course, there's the perpetual idea that the wealthy and powerful owe nothing to the weak and powerless, which was now given moral authority by supposedly ironclad laws of nature.

The "white man's burden" and other paternalistic notions about bringing freedom and democracy to indigenous people also owe plenty to this nineteenth-century meme.

Malthus, the first demographer for transnational interests, mapped the world's resource base. The British Empire did the rest. In a remarkably transparent speech to parliament in 1914, Winston Churchill said, "We are not a young people with innocent record and a scanty inheritance. We have engrossed to ourselves an altogether disproportionate share of wealth and traffic of the world. We have all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force, often seems less reasonable to others than to us."

The idea that might makes right, and its justification through scarcity, still persists today. There's an enduring current of thought in western culture that we, as individuals, nations or species, adapt and improve through making others lose. Even though evolutionary biology has come to see cooperation as important as competition, the social sciences have yet to catch up. Classical economics still persists in the notion that human beings are "rational utility maximizers," isolated agents that are driven by nothing more than self-interest. Modelling more subtle forms of behaviour, such as the altruism within families and communities, would simply make the numbers blow up.

One thinker who saw through this self-serving cant was Richard Buckminster Fuller, best known for his contributions to mathematics and architecture, including his "geodesic dome." With his elfin stature and coke-bottle-thick, black glasses, the Bostonian became an instantly recognizable icon for intellectual adventurism in the sixties. He wore many hats, including that of poet, urban critic, social scientist and global planner. (A decade after his death, an enclosed molecule was discovered that actually follows the "synergistic" geometry Fuller believed would be found on all levels of nature once researchers began to look for it. In his honour, the molecule was named buckminsterfullerene, or "bucky ball.")

While Fuller believed that properly applied design science could free all human beings on the planet from poverty and ignorance, "advantaging all without disadvantaging any," he noted that the correct application of these sciences was perpetually held back by "ignorance, fear, and zoning laws."

Born into a very wealthy Boston family, Fuller had a unique insight into the Malthusian mindset of the ruling class. In the biography, *Bucky: A Guided Tour*, author Hugh Kenner explained how a "rich uncle did Bucky the favour of taking him aside to explain in Boston's terms how the world was." The unpleasant, but unassailable, truth was this: there wasn't enough to go round for everyone. "This had apparently been proven mathematically, three generations early, when the statistician Thomas Malthus demonstrated exactly how population tended to outstrip resources."

The balding Brahmins of Boston, like the elite class elsewhere, "had outgrown the era of the Golden Rule, the formulation of a less crowded world." As Bucky's uncle explained, "The possessions of the haves were now founded on the destitution of the have-nots, and despite Sunday-school pieties serviceable to placate women, that was henceforth the unalterable state of things."

In Kenner's retelling, the rich uncle told the young lad that it was necessary for a rich man "to cultivate enough of the red tooth and the unsheathed claw to ensure that he and his loved ones should be haves. This was not nice, and he need not distress the innocent by talking of it, but there was really no choice."

It had been established that a man's chance of passing his life in any comfort was about one in 100. "It is not you or the other fellow," the uncle explained; "It is you or one hundred others." To prosper in the Fuller way with a family of five, he would have to slit the throats – genteelly, of course – of 500 others. "So, do it as neatly and cleanly and politely as you know how, and as your conscience will allow."

By imagining historical necessity and biological destiny were one and the same, Fuller's relatives had discovered that human evolution had peaked, by good fortune, with themselves. Bucky ended up rejecting their Scrooge-on-steroids reasoning, believing it to be based on nineteenth-century, closed system thinking.

The architect and mathematician believed the world is rung by what he called, "lawyer assisted capitalism." The original sin of LAWCAP was to believe that the struggle for finite resources condemned the majority of the world's inhabitants to misery, while providing wealth and comfort to only the most cunning and predatory. Wrong, said Fuller. Since the end of the eighteenth century, technology has "emphemeralized," increasing the energy yield of resources while simultaneously discovering new resources.

With late Victorian industrialization, steam power supplied work "for free," beyond human or horsepower and factories could be kept going throughout the night. Malthus foresaw none of this – how could he? – nor could he have predicted the scientific discoveries of the twentieth century, which created entirely new markets and middle class wealth, along with increasingly sophisticated weapons of destruction.

Fuller insisted that population does not increase steadily, but actually levels off when design science extends to all its members. In fact, demographic studies have consistently demonstrated that one of the most significant factors in reducing national birth rates is the education of women.

As American philosopher Robert Anton Wilson once observed, "Known resources are not given by nature; they depend on the analytical capacities of the human mind. We can never know how many resources can be obtained from a cubic foot of the universe: all we know is how much we have found thus far, at a given date. You can starve in the middle of a field of wheat if your mind hasn't identified wheat as edible. Real Wealth results from Real Knowledge, which is increasing faster all the time."

So what does the economics of abundance actually look like? We'll take a look at this next month.

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The idea that might makes right, and its justification through scarcity, still persists today. There's an enduring current of thought in western culture that we, as individuals, nations or species, adapt and improve through making others lose.

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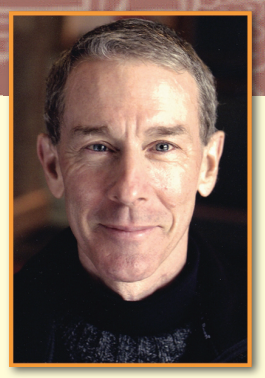

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...continued from p. 4

if you want to start a war and needs lots of soldiers.

This can be gold to the small but powerful group of leaders who want to rule the world's resources or economy, especially if they monopolize most of the mass media. When people are threatened, the fight or flight response kicks in. Whether the terror is real or imagined, the physical response is the same: the heartbeat goes up, cortisone increases and the mind focuses on the perceived threat. This phenomena is aptly captured by Mark Twain's quote: "I have been through some terrible things in my life... some of which actually happened."

People react if they believe a threat is real. They stop looking at all the options; they don't check the accuracy of the statements and they hunker down into their mental bunkers to fight or weather the storm, (or hurricane, as in the disaster in New Orleans), believing help will come soon.

Smart and powerful people manufacture belief in terror and derive consent to a "there-is-no-other-choice" solution, which always robs people of their money, rights, resources or property.

It is not much different today as it was in the Dark Ages, the Industrial Revolution, numerous hot or cold wars, dropping the big one, YK2, WMD or the current economic terror. If Henny Penny believes the sky is falling, Henny Penny's eggs can be stolen.

In other words, we are lied to in order to believe a lie so that those who lie can benefit from their fraud. And they need us, the middle class and the huddled masses, to buy into their con because they need us for cannon fodder.

Another way of describing this relationship was coined by Dr. John Gofman, the scientist who isolated the first gram of plutonium. Gofman worked on the Manhattan Project along with Albert Einstein and others to develop the first atomic bomb. People like Einstein had agreed to develop the bomb because they were promised it would not be used on people, but rather exploded off-shore as a demonstration to the Japanese to induce their surrender. The agreement was with president Roosevelt, who died in office and Harry Truman took over and immediately signed the directive to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These eminent scientist, some of them pacifists, were taken advantage of by powerful forces that lied because they wanted to use the discovery for their geo-political purposes.

The scientists were played the same way the public gets played. Gofman noted there are two classes of people. There is no longer the left or the right, nor the north or the south, but rather the screwers and the screwees. Truman worked for those moneyed interests who wanted to show those pesky Russians (remember the same ones who were our allies to defeat Hitler) who were running the world. So they demonstrated US might by desecrating not just one but two cities in Japan. The victors wrote the history books and conveniently rearranged the facts and left out what they did not want us peasants to know. Because part of their game is to keep us believing that they would never do bad things to good people. And that they would always tell us the truth about who the good guys and bad guys are. Who the invaders and the liberartors are. Who the saviours and the sinners are. The game unfortunately goes on until their lies are no longer believable, which requires a fair amount of delving into what is really going on.

Hopefully as the curtains close on 2008, we can see the light returning after the solstice at the end of this tunnel vision.

So it is with great hope that our dreams for change and for fairness, compassion and justice will actually happen.

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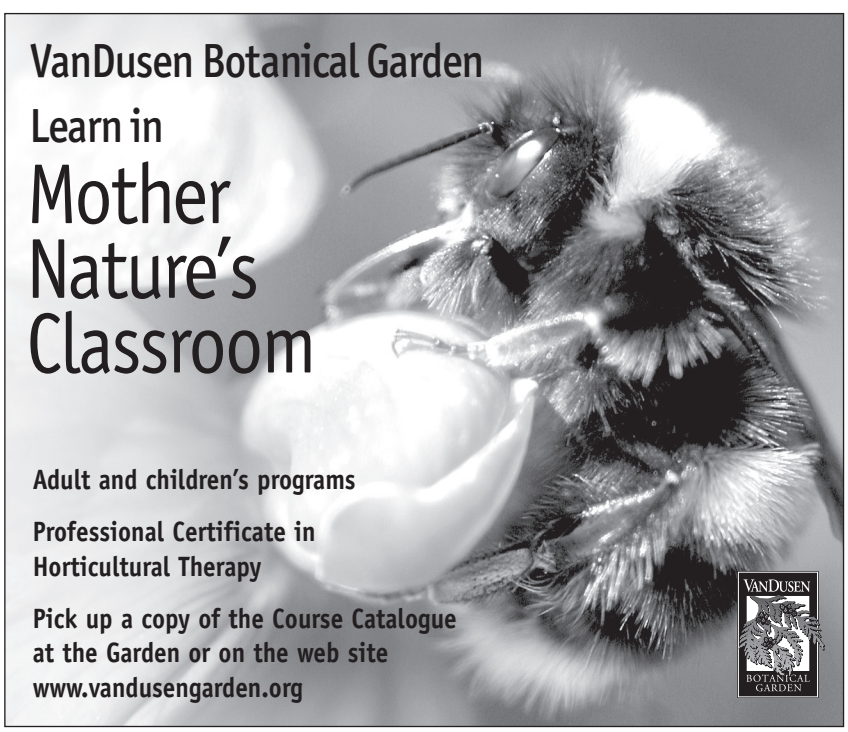

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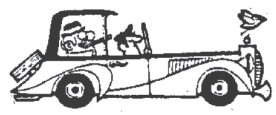

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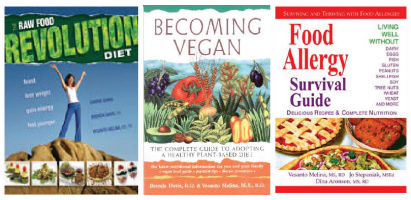

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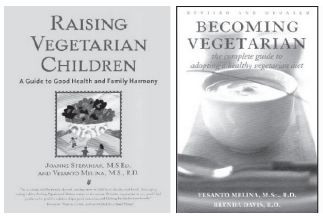

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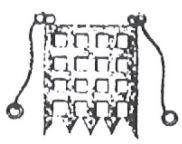

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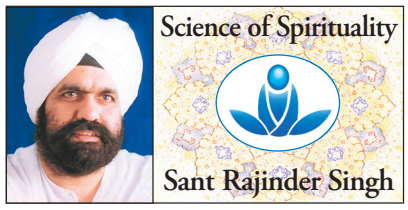

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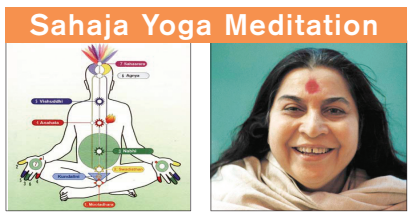

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...Drug Bust continued from p. 7

because of something else? We researchers can help you tease out the truth.

Better feedback from consumers: Think outside the box in terms of getting consumers to report Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) to the regulator. Why not hand out a postcard to someone getting a new drug for the first time? They can use it to note their experiences after, say, six months and mail it back to Health Canada. We need better real-world experience of drugs in real people so we need to strenuously encourage people to file Adverse Drug Reports (ADRs) with Health Canada. Is a new drug causing you to bark like a dog? Call Canada's Adverse Reaction hotline at 1-866-234-2345 or email cadrmp@hc-sc.gc.ca

And the last item on my wish list:

Enforce regulations against drug ads: Because the taxpayer can never outspend drug companies in advertising, make it harder for them to do so. In 2006 alone, Pfizer spent nearly $7 million on a Celebrex advertising campaign directed at Canadians. Can Health Canada compete with this? It might have helped if the regulator started by reining in the potentially illegal advertising on a drug that had at least three public advisories on the airwaves (May 2002, December 2004 and September 2005). Canadians were advised that old people needed the lowest dose possible and that the drug should be used with caution in patients with heart failure hypertension or edema, and so on. Even if Canadians saw the Health Canada warnings, they would have been completely overwhelmed by the Celebrex ads.

Maybe Health Canada should advertise too. If it's important for them to get their "brand" out there and become a trusted source of information about drug safety, why shouldn't we see their ads on billboards and TV? Better yet, why not consider sponsoring a Formula One racecar or a Tour de France team? Wouldn't that be neat?

Imagine seeing someone in a yellow jersey on the podium wearing the slogan, "Your prescription drug could kill you – A message brought to you by Health Canada."

Now that's thinking outside the box. Happy New Year to all.

Alan Cassels is a pharmaceutical policy researcher at the University of Victoria and the author of the newly published ABCs of Disease Mongering. *This little pink book full of whimsy and pharmaceutical verse would fit into your loved one's stocking for less than $10.*

Making the links

INDEPENDENT MEDIA Steve Anderson

CULTURE

Editor's note: Common Ground *is pleased to introduce this new monthly column which surveys the effects of mass media on our culture.*

illustration © Shanti Hadioetomo

Whether you are concerned with issues pertaining to health, the economy or the environment, the current democratic deficit in media limits opportunities for social change. If open public discussion is the oxygen of social change and progress; undemocratic media systems suffocate that oxygen. As Nicholas Johnson, a former US Federal Communications commissioner put it, "Whatever your first issue of concern, media had better be your second, because without change in the media, progress in your primary area is far less likely."

Media ownership in Canada is more concentrated than almost anywhere else in the industrialized world. In June 2006, the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications' *Report on the Canadian News Media* concluded there are "…areas where the concentration of ownership has reached levels that few other countries would consider acceptable." Since that report, we've seen several major media mergers including Rogers Communcations' purchase of CHUM, Quebecor's purchase of the Osprey newspaper chain and Canwest Global and New York investment bank Goldman Sachs' purchase of Alliance Atlantis.

Making matters worse, as the focus of governments and policy makers has shifted toward strengthening commercial media, public broadcasters have been defunded or privatized. The CBC, for example, now receives half of what it used to get from Parliament 20 years ago on a per capita basis, and Canada ranks 16th out of 18 industrialized countries in terms of public financing for public broadcasting. The community media sector – a vibrant site of domestic programming and public participation in some countries – remains relatively weak and independent media continues to struggle to find the support it needs to effectively compete with big media.

The current transition from analog to digital media provides important opportunities to increase the diversity of media. While a lack of financial support continues to haunt independent media projects, the relatively cheap media distribution system provided by the Internet makes independent media more viable and accessible. However, looking at the history of other mediums (TV, radio) that could have themselves been utilized as open mediums, we would be wise to not take the openness of the Internet for granted. There is already a battle brewing between big telecom companies and the Canadian public. If the companies win, a small cartel of corporate gatekeepers will control both the cost and access of web-based content (See www.SaveOurNet.ca).

Concentrated media systems reflect and reinforce a narrow frame of public debate and dialogue, diminishing our sense of new possibilities and alternatives for everything from political issues to our everyday lives. But history shows that when confronted with widespread civic engagement around media issues, politicians and policy makers bow to popular pressure. In recounting his successful (1930s) campaign to establish CBC Radio, early media democracy advocate Graham Spry said, "Our greatest ally was undoubtedly, anxious, disturbed and alert Canadian public opinion."

Media ownership in Canada is more concentrated than almost anywhere else in the industrialized world…the concentration of ownership has reached levels that few other countries would consider acceptable.

In 2002, an Ipsos-Reid poll found that 86 percent of Canadians believed that the federal government should do something to alleviate public concerns about media concentration. I hope that this column will help alert and engage this unheard majority.

News: In a move that has disappointed many Canadian high-tech leaders and public interest groups, the CRTC announced on November 20 that it will not force Bell Canada to stop its controversial Internet throttling practices. The CRTC is abdicating its responsibility to Canadian people and putting us on a path towards a more closed Internet defined by the interests of big telecom companies. (Learn more at www.democraticmedia.ca)

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for the Campaign for Democratic Media. He contributed to Censored 2008 *and* Battleground: The Media *and has written for* The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times *and* Adbusters. *Reach him at: steve@democraticmedia.ca*
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A scene from *RiP: A Remix Manifesto.*

Ripping tales

FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead

Intellectual property rights is one of the most vexing issues of the digital era. People on different sides of the planet exchange music, software, images, TV shows and even entire movies over the internet. Traditional media companies are terrified; the old business model has been predicated on big media being able to control the distribution channels – CDs, DVDs, TV and so on – but digital technology and the internet have changed everything. Users are becoming more sophisticated at ripping, editing and sharing digitized content for free across the wires, using peer-to-peer software. It may not always be strictly copyright legal, but as media conglomerates are discovering at great expense, there's little they can do to prevent this growing trend.

RiP: A Remix Manifesto, a feisty, NFB-produced documentary showing at the Whistler Film Festival December 4-7, is a call to overhaul copyright laws. As the title suggests, *RiP* is particularly interested in the legally grey area of remixing existing works, although director Brett Gaylor also introduces individual mom 'n pop downloaders who have been stamped on by the heavy boot of the litigious music industry. The group includes high school kids, a Texan pastor and Jammie Thomas, the single mom ordered to pay the recording industry $222,000 for allegedly downloading 24 songs. By criminalizing its customers, the music industry has set itself up for attack and Gaylor has great fun mocking its bully-boy tactics.

RiP focuses on trendy, laptop musician Girl Talk, aka Gregg Gillis, a Pittsburgh biomedical engineer who mashes-up hundreds of samples from other artists' works into his own distinctive compositions. The film suggests that artists have borrowed from their predecessors since time immemorial and that digital mash-ups are just an extension of that. What's more, the cost of getting clearance for Girl Talk to perform the songs would be prohibitive. So he doesn't, although the threat of litigation always hovers over his head. Gaylor memorably makes the point about how copyright is stifling creativity by teasing us with footage of a Girl Talk gig where everyone is clearly having a great time (including Paris Hilton), but the soundtrack is muted. He uses the same device with the song *Happy Birthday* – owned by Time Warner – to show how absurd copyright law can be when taken to its natural conclusion.

This is the kind of film where everyone is either a villain or hero. Metallica and the Rolling Stones come off badly as big-business recording artists, while Radiohead, which released its album direct to the web for whatever price fans wanted to pay for it, appears progressive. Star interviewee is Lawrence Lessig, the Stanford prof who came up with the ubiquitous Creative Commons licence and helped make redefining copyright laws one of the blogosphere's *causes célèbres*.

Manifestos aren't subtle things; big media is not quite as loony as it appears here. Some artists won't warm to the message "Times are changing; get used to it," but *RiP*'s campaign-style approach still pays off with an entertaining 80 minutes complete with snappy, video mash-ups and montages. Look for *Rip* in cinemas this spring. You can contribute to a remix of the film at www.opensourcecinema.org

Robert Alstead blogs at www.2020Vancouver.com

A family tradition

Perhaps nothing distinguishes Vancouver's West Broadway more than the iconic Hollywood Theatre. Remarkably, the theatre has operated as a family-run business since David Fairleigh received it as a birthday gift in 1935, after his father, on orders from his wife, built the theatre so her children would have jobs. David was then 19 and he ran the Hollywood until his death in 1998.

The first features screened were *Lightning Strikes Twice* and *Life Begins at 40*. David's grandson Vince Fairleigh proudly continues the family tradition of second-run excellence.
3123 West Broadway, 604-738-3211, www.hollywoodtheatre.ca

Datebook

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www.africanfairtradesociety.com

DEC 13

Shamanic Drummng and Dreaming Circle: Saturday, 7-10pm. Experience insight/healing from your Nature Spirit Animal Totem guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254, W. 7th. Donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636. www.shamanichealing.info

DEC 14

Josephine Harrison, artist-writer and humanitarian talks about documented unexplained healings and phenomena appearing in media reports from all over the world. Presentation 3 pm, Sunday, YWCA Hotel, 733 Beatty, CANFOR Room. Free event sponsored by Tara Canada. Donations gratefully accepted.

DEC 2

Free Talk on Past Life Regression. Satisfy your curiosity. West Vancouver Library, 1950 Marine Drive, 5-6pm, FREE www.lifebetweenlives.ca

DEC 2

Past Life Regression. Experience a fascinating journey into your PAST to understand your PRESENT. West Vancouver Library 1950 Marine Drive, 6 PM, $75. Registration- www.lifebetweenlives.ca 1-888-606-8463

DEC. 17

DVT Peer Support Group. For those with Deep Vein Thrombosis including Pulmonary Embolism. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Burnaby Library-McGill. Registration and info: Brenda 604-309-0610.

DEC 20

Christmas In The Round & Winter Solstice Celebration with the Jerry DesVoignes and the MantraVani Orchestra. Sat Dec 20th - 8pm, St Marks Church, 1805 Larch and W. 2nd. Tickets $25 advance and $30 at the door. Available at Banyen Books & other outlets. Info:www.healingvoices.net

DEC 20

Luminance - A Multimedia Winter Solstice Celebration Film, ecstatic dance ritual, performance, visionary art, music and dancing until 5am. Scotiabank Dance Centre. Tickets, information: www.ekstasisdance.com/luminancev 778-868-7534

DEC 20

Wolfsong Chanting Circle - Winter Solstice Celebration: Saturday, 7-10pm. Participate drumming/singing healing chants from the Spirit of the Land. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254 W. 7th. Donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636. www.shamanichealing.info

DEC 24-27

Christmas Celebration Retreat: Connect to the stillness and peace of this beautiful time of year during our silent retreat at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. www.selfrealizationcentrecanada.com 1-604-740-0898.

DEC 29-JAN 1

New Year Gathering: An opportunity to rest and reflect on the year ahead in a loving and nurturing atmosphere at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. www.selfrealizationcentrecanada.com 1-604-740-0898.

DEC 31

Prayers for world peace, 6:30-7:30pm, 31 Dec. Open house, 12noon-3pm, 1 Jan. Everyone welcome. Tilopa Buddhist Centre, 1829 Victoria Diversion, Vancouver. www.tilopa.org

FEB 6-8

From L.A. – Julian Walker, student of Ana Forrest, influenced by Ken Wilbur, Jack Kornfield, Stan Groff and Gabriel Roth teaches an integrated heart-opening weekend of yoga, ecstatic dance, healing breathwork and sound. 3-hr classes: $45 or $160/4. Contact Christina: 604-649-8522, shaktipower@shaw.ca

FEB 14

Dance for the Future of Organic Farming 8th Annual Chicken & Egg Dance Bring Your Valentine! Capri Hall/Subud Centre. 6 - 11pm 3925 Fraser St. @ King Edward Advance tickets $12/adults˜ $6/ children under 12 or $15/$7.50 door Call Susan 604-857-1400 or check www.organics.bc.ca for ticket info or to make a donation for the silent auction.

FRIDAYS

DRU Yoga is in Kits: Gentle, Flowing, Heart-based, Energetic. Beginners Welcome. Classes held Friday evenings Sept-Jan., 7-8:30 PM, St. James Community Square, 3214 W. 10TH at Trutch, 604-876-5153 soulforce@telus.net www.sjcommunitysquare.org

Destiny Dialogues Free Talks First Friday of each month, experiential evening that explores the inter-connections between destiny and suffering, relationships, vocations, joy, teachers, character, nature, family, dreams. 7-9pm. 604-317-1613.

Just Dance! Three Fridays a month. Alcohol & smoke-free. 9pm, 2114 W. 4th Ave. @ Arbutus. $10/5. www.justdance.ca.

Give Peace a Chant! Energize yourself with the yoga of KIRTAN,Sanskrit call and response yoga chanting, healing mantras and sound vibrations in a friendly community setting. No experience necessary. New schedule: 1st, 3rd, and 5th Friday nights only, 7:30 pm, $10-20 by donation, 2111 W. 16th Ave @ Arbutus, www.givepeaceachant.org

WEDNESDAYS

Hawaiian Medicine Circle 7pm Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks. $10 donation. At Hale Ola, 1215 Madison Avenue, Burnaby. 604-431-7474 Call Kamu Kaimana

Voice Dialogue (7-9 pm) Cultivating awareness of the intelligence within; explore how to enhance relationship intimacy and grow more fully into who you are meant to be. Call Dave @ 604-985-5771 or 604-488-9203 www.davewaugh.net

Dru Yoga classes with Darquise: East Side Yoga 1707 Grant St at Commercial, 7:15-8:45pm.

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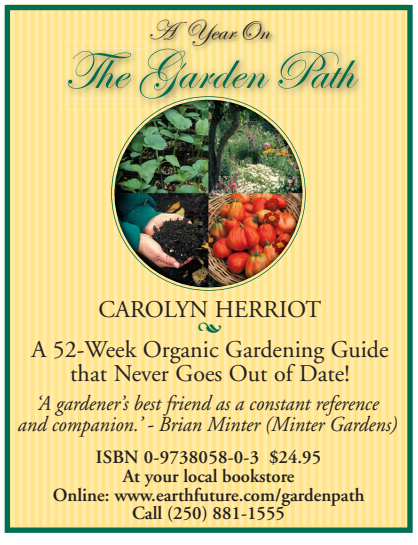
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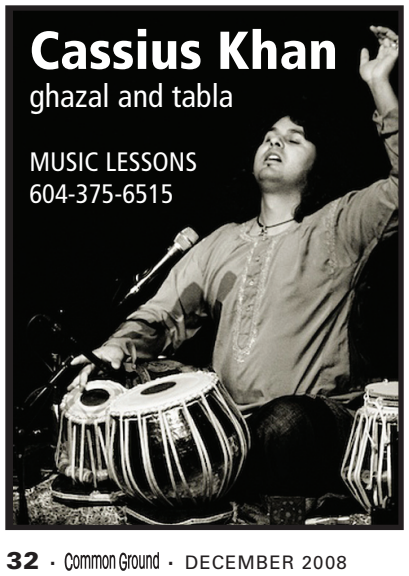

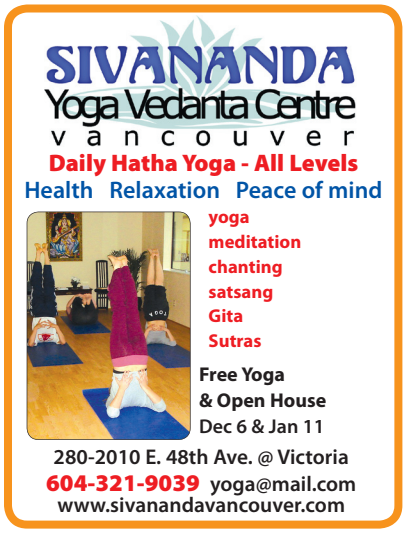

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events
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2950 Laurel St. (at 14th), Vancouver
Pranic Healing Clinics in Vancouver
St. George's, 2950 Laurel St. (at 14th)
Tuesday: 11 AM - 3 PM & 6 - 9 PM
Dec 2nd & 9th Reopens Jan 13th
The Meditation for Planetary Peace is held at the beginning of each clinic.
Last healing begins half-hour before closing.
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www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm

Classifieds

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Contact anahatabreath@shaw.ca 604-936-3255.

SUNDAYS

Spiritual Centre for Dynamic Living. If you enjoy Oprah's Soul Series with leading spiritual teachers, you'll feel at home in our community. Sundays 11AM - Vancouver Planetarium, 1100 Chestnut St. www.dynamiccentre.com

Centre for Spiritual Living. Are you inspired to experience greater connection through spiritual teachings and great music in the company of loving, like-minded people? Join us for our Sunday Celebration Service at 11:00am - 1495 W 8th Ave (Masonic Hall). Meditation Service at 10:15am. 604-321-1225 www.cslvancouver.com

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

Laughter Club. Laugh as you have never laughed before and feel refreshed, invigorated, and relaxed. 3-4pm Open Door Yoga Studio, 1111 Commercial Drive Info. farah@thesmilingyogi.com

Free, anonymous, telephone support line: Guided meditations for people suffering from chronic pain. Non-religious. Counsellors have community crisis line training. 7-11PM, 604-936-5683.

Unity In Action - The Church For Personal Growth AWAKEN TO GOD CONSCIOUSNESS - Sundays - 11AM. 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster 604-526-1421 www.unityinaction.ca

ONGOING

Free Meditation Workshop: Experience Kundalini awakening through Sahaja Yoga, as taught by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi & enjoy your Powers at our Weekly classes, always free and open to all. 604-597-8440, www.sahajayoga.org.

Unitarian kids believe in their ability and responsibility to make a difference in the world. Programs for kids 3 years and up, 370 Mathers St., West Vancouver, 604-926-1621, www.nsuc.ca.

Events at VanDusen Botanical Garden: Visit www.vandusengarden.org

Profound Healing & Ensouling: Embrace your path and your power. 6-week courses Early Nov. to Dec. Contact info: www.dynamicharmony.com Remi Thivierge, 604-662-7837.

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MEXICO Feb 9-13 and Feb 16-22/09. TOFINO and SALTSPRING ISLAND/09. Certified Teacher Dorothy Price www.dorothyoga.com
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www.spiritualemergence.net, 604-533-3545

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SECOND WIND STORIES is inviting submissions for a proposed anthology about true-life love & success stories by 40-somethings.
Visit www.secondwindstories.com

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The Joy of Song: Voices Rising Ensemble entertains a crowd attending an opening of work by artist Hillary Wood at the Britannia Art Gallery last month.

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Dolphin Spirit Events

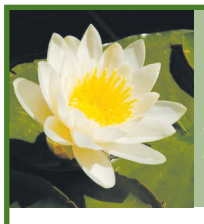
Visions and Visionaries
Saturday Jan 24 10 am - 8 pm.
Compass Point Inn, 9850 King George Hwy.
Taking apps for exhibitors and psychic readers now.
778-887-7331

Speaker of the Month
Thurs Jan 8- **Why Hypnosis?**
Thurs Feb 5- **Intuition and Consciousness**
Check website for location

Pain Mgmt Workshop for NLP Practitioners & Hypnotherapists
- New York's Michael Ellner Feb 21 - 22

details: www.dolphinspiritevents.com
778-887-7331 or **778-238-2427**
jeannie@dolphinspiritevents.com

DANCE
for the Future of Organic Farming
8th Annual Chicken & Egg Dance
Feb 14, 6 - 11pm
Bring Your Valentine!
Capri Hall/Subud Centre
3925 Fraser St. @ King Edward
Advance tickets $12/adults
$6/children under 12 or $15/$7.50 door
Call Susan 604-857-1400
or check www.organics.bc.ca
for ticket info
or to make a donation
for the silent auction



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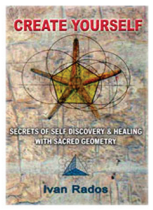

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10am - 8pm. Taking apps. for trade show vendors, exhibitors and Psychic readers now. 778/887-7331

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Tues - Mar 24th 7pm - cost $35 (US)

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Tickets available online - www.SoulPower.ca 604/833-3073
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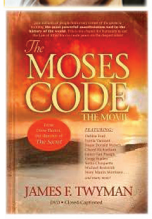
James Twyman

"The Season for Non-Violence Concert"
Friday - Feb. 20th @ 7pm - cost $25 (after 12/25 $35)
St. Andrews Church Vancouver



"The Moses Code Workshop"
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On Track Zodiac

DECEMBER 2008 Adrien Dilon

ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
You may be able to make merry with your muse. Passions arise with ceremony and splendour. You will gain much from your love interests or personal involvements. Physical activity and self-confidence are heightened.

TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)
You might feel quite lazy and may even wish to become more self-indulgent than usual. Your personal magnetism is as shiny as a new penny. Perhaps take in more artistic and creative activities and drink in all the possibilities for inspiration. A time of working with all the points of arousal follows.

GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)
You are more mercurial than usual, perhaps causing you to go in several directions and ending up in a maze of choices. Put on your analytical hat, not your madcap. As you process more of your inclinations to be devil-may-care, you can really stir things up and create the "change" you desire.

CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)
If you are searching for a mate, you don't need to go on a dating website to state your claim. You could make your intentions real by creating a list for personal fulfillment. There is a paradox involved with having your needs met and a deep longing to be heard. Your unconscious mind is able to dramatize your desires now.

LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)
When it comes to personal pain or difficulty, all suffering is significant if it brings wisdom, clarity and knowledge. The search for meaning may bring about important events that often come as a great surprise. You are entering a gateway to illumination that will stream into you.

VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)
Being a sensitive person is indeed a gift. However, there is a requirement that you also take care of yourself. Any gestures of your humanitarian efforts need a balance; find in that process the way to also heal thyself. To love another is true giving. Acceptance blends with charity.

LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)
What you want from life may still elude you. You may feel that what you have been seeking is beyond your grasp. Perhaps it is the communion with the "one" that is needed. The very depths of your understanding are about to take a sharp turn. The question is who is the "one" you've been missing?

SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
Do not attempt anything that hasn't been thoroughly planned and tested or unexpected incidents may become the norm. A re-evaluation of your goals is necessary. Work seems to be requiring more of your time and mental energy. Do what you can to recharge your batteries to stay fresh and aware.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
Don't take short cuts with your health; you can't afford to hinder your pathway to well being. Mental clarity culminates, allowing for completion of projects and the initiation of new ones. A revised personal health system and concern for wholeness is important.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
The ruler of this sign is given to matters regarding your parents; their influence makes or breaks your mark in society. You either wish to become like them or you realize that it is not your purpose to follow their ways and habits. You may now give yourself the authority to do things on your own terms.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)
Your level of detachment has softened and you have perhaps opened the lid and flipped the cap off some bottled-up emotions. Your well-guarded sensitivity may beg for an outlet. It is best to face reality because your idealistic approach needs clarity of purpose. Escapism meets a new reality of the way things really are.

PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)
You have distinguished yourself from the crowd perhaps because that was the only choice you had. Your many dark nights of perceived anguish have resulted in self-actualization. As the mythical bird that dies in flames and is reborn from the ashes, the Phoenix sets its own course for resurrection.

Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 33 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, *adrien.dilon@gmail.com*.

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Deepak Chopra

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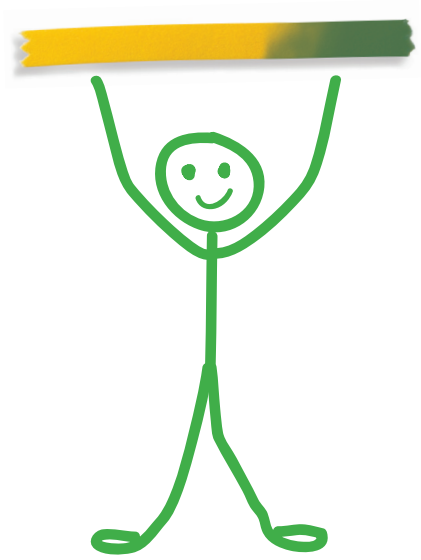

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